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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002804

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

NEA/I PLEASE PASS GRAMAGLIA, SILVERMAN, EB/TRA

TAGS: [FAIR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [ECON](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: BAGHDAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT LIKELY TO CLOSE
AGAIN AS "GOOD FAITH" BECOMES "BAD FAITH"

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REF: BAGHDAD 2745 AND PREVIOUS

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Baghdad International Airport (BIAP) appears poised for closure yet again Sunday, July 3 at 1700 local time due to the Iraq Transitional Government's (ITG) inability to meet the obligations it agreed to last week (REFTEL). If Global Risk Management ("Global"), the current security contractor, orders another "stand down" on July 3 the ITG will likely move to replace Global via an emergency bid process. Our best guess is that BIAP will remain closed to civilian air operations for up to three weeks as the ITG mobilizes a new security force. Before BIAP can reopen the new security procedures must be assessed and pass muster with both Coalition and Iraqi military commands at BIAP. We raised the possible imminent closure of BIAP with Laith Kubba, an advisor to the Prime Minister on July 2. Kubba was disturbed, saying he thought the matter had been resolved and that he would look into it immediately. If Global departs and new security arrangements are put in place by the ITG, the Embassy will request the Department of Homeland Security to immediately redeploy a Transportation Security Administration team to BIAP in order to evaluate the new security operation and get the airport up and running again as soon as possible. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) Despite agreed to "next steps" (REFTEL) on resolving the BIAP security situation, the ITG has not acted to meet its obligations to pay its outstanding debts to Global. On June 29 the Prime Minister's office and the Ministry of Transportation should have sent paperwork to the Ministry of Finance to effect payment of the close to \$12 million owed to Global. This did not occur, despite draft language and other support provided by both the Embassy's IRMO Finance and IRMO Transportation offices.

3. (SBU) Intense contract negotiations held earlier last week ceased as Global reported an inability to contact their counterparts. Meetings planned for June 29-30 (last days of the Iraqi work week) between ITG lawyers and Global attorneys to discuss contract language did not occur. According to Global, their Iraqi counterparts did not return phone calls throughout the day. Global's in-country management told us on July 1 that Global's Board of Directors believes that the ITG is deliberately deceiving them. The company committed to providing U.S. military commanders at BIAP a 24-hour warning prior to "standing down" their operations.

4. (SBU) EMINCOUNS alerted PM advisor Laith Kubba on July 2 to the possible imminent closure of BIAP, and the possibility of a two to three week period in which it would remain closed until new procedures are in place. Kubba was disturbed, saying that he thought the issue had been resolved. He said he would look into it immediately and get back to us.

5. (SBU) COMMENT: Global suspects, and we are inclined to believe, that senior levels of the ITG have been actively working to line up possible successors to the security contract at BIAP while keeping up the pretense of engagement with Global. Now that mechanisms such as the emergency bid procedure are in place, Global's utility as an "interim measure" to keep the commercial side of BIAP open may have lost its appeal. Regardless of what arrangements the ITG may have worked out, a two to three week closure of service is extremely likely. If the ITG replaces Global at BIAP, the Embassy will require the immediate services of a TSA assessment team for 3-5 days to evaluate the replacement firm's security measures in order to get the airport up and running again as soon as possible. We also strongly encourage the earliest possible deployment of the DHS attache to the Embassy and the agreed-upon TSA advisors to serve at BIAP for 90 days until Embassy is able to hire its own aviation security experts. END COMMENT.

6. (SBU) REO Hillah, REO Mosul, REO Kirkuk, REO Basrah,

minimize considered.

SATTERFIELD